

Textile Magnate Ready**Army Set for Business Rule**

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"Willie" Stevens, an Army private, "somewhere in Europe," may be a somewhat surprised young man when he wakes up and finds he is the son of the newly designated Secretary of the Army in the Eisenhower administration.

"He's liable to wake up and find himself a lieutenant," a reporter quipped to the father, Robert Ten Broeck Stevens, head of one of the largest textile manufacturing companies in the United States.

"Oh, no," came the quick reply.

Mr. Stevens, who met President-elect Eisenhower for the first time just the day before his appointment was announced, is not ready to tell what his plans would be for cutting out waste that has been charged up to the military establishment under the Democratic administration, but he conceded: "The Army is a great big business in effect, and it probably needs business assistance in a certain sense of the word."

Not only has Mr. Stevens been engaged in a highly successful textile business, J. P. Stevens & Co., Inc., for 31 years, but he has served as chairman of the Business Advisory Council of the Department of Commerce, and during World War II as a colonel in the Quartermaster Corps he was in charge of all textile procurement for the Army.

Most Completely Unknown

Nobody, Mr. Stevens said, was more surprised at his appointment than himself. "I must be the most completely unknown ever to be appointed," he said, though on his wall hang autographed photos of his former Army superiors, among them Robert P. Patterson and Gen. George C. Marshall, and on his desk was a cordial telegram of congratulation from President Truman's Secretary of the Army, Frank Pace, Jr., and he admitted knowing the new Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, "fairly well."

Pointing out that he had been unable to be active in Republican politics since becoming chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, he said, "Possibly it was my experience in World War II that they had heard about, though it was in a relatively low echelon."

Mr. Stevens said he would resign his directorships in the General Electric Company, the General Foods Corporation, and Jackson Mills,

retaining only his membership on the Yale University Board of Trustees.

The J. P. Stevens firm, from which he will take leave, was formerly a family firm dating back to 1813, but it started selling stock in 1946, and today has 10,000 stockholders.

Though he has lived all his life in Plainfield, N.J., Mr. Stevens has now moved many of his plants into southeastern United States, where he spends considerable time. He also operates a cattle ranch in Montana.

Family Is His Hobby

Asked about hobbies, the incoming Secretary of the Army replied, "It sounds trite, but I guess it's my family."

In addition to Willie (William G.), there are four other children: Robert, Jr., who married a daughter of Louis Bromfield, author, and runs a farm near Mansfield, Ohio; Whitney, who is a junior salesman in his father's firm; Joan, who works in Washington for the Central Intelligence Agency, and Tom, age nine, who is at home.

Commuting daily between his New Jersey home and his firm's new office building at 41st and Broadway in New York City, Mr. Stevens said he finds little time for outside activities any more. When he reads, he likes either business literature or accounts of World War II.

Out of his pocket, the new "Little Cabinet" member pulled a card issued to him by Secretary Pace designating him as a "civilian aide" to the Army.

"That," he said, "means that I have been serving as a local representative of the Army, doing such jobs as improving public relations in the community. I've had it about a year now, and it runs until 1954. Then he added as an afterthought and laughed, "Unless, of course, I should decide to cancel it."

Business reporters asked Mr. Stevens if he had a "system of management" he would take from his business firm to the Pentagon, but he said he had not. He merely said he hoped "to be a party in improving the efficiency of the Army in any way I possibly can."

As for cooperation between the various branches of the armed service, a subject that has given considerable trouble in Washington, Mr. Stevens noted, "I feel General Ike is putting together a fine team, and that should mean excellent cooperation in the services."